

without these interventions, was the positive result of his negative criticism. This idea seems to form the basis of all his objections and of all his scepticism. This was the centre of a rather unsystematised crowd of thoughts which he threw out on the world, which have sometimes been regarded as detached and chaotic.

The same principle appears in his attitude towards Church services. The degree to which a rite increased the real devotion of the people was, he declared, the test of its propriety.<sup>1</sup> He found that intoning and elaborate singing took the mind off the meaning of the prayer.<sup>2</sup> He quoted St. Augustine's dictum \* as oft as the song delighteth me more than that is songen, so oft I acknowledge I trespass grievously/ This became a favourite text with his followers.<sup>3</sup> By the same standard, he judged that the splendid building and gaudy decoration of churches drew away the minds of the worshippers.<sup>4</sup> In that age, whatever deterioration there might be in other spheres of ecclesiastical activity, the unbroken but progressive tradition of Gothic architecture still continued to fill the country with achievements as noble as any that the art of man has accomplished ; each generation saw the realm of beauty enlarged by some new idea in Church building. At the same time the Church services, in the hands of armies of choristers and chantry priests, were being adorned by music more difficult and by intoning more elaborate than the old Gregorian chants.<sup>5</sup>

But what were these new beauties to the class of men who find no reality of worship under such forms, and who require something altogether different by way of religion ? To their needs and thoughts Wycliffe gave expression in language which, compared to his language on some other subjects, is extremely moderate. But his demand was distinct, and it was founded on a want deeply felt by many of his countrymen. We are not surprised to find that the Lollards in the next generation found no comfort in the services of the

\* *De Ecclesiis*, cap. ii, 45-6 ; *S. E. W.*, iii, 203-28.

<sup>a</sup> *Opus Evangelicum*, i, 261. <sup>s</sup> *Matt.*, 191; *S. E. W.*, iii, 228, 480.

\* *Opus Evangelicum*, i, 263.

\* *S. E. W.*, iii, 203-28; *Matt.* 76-7 and 16&.